

An Essay by 
My Art within a Postmodern Context

“When there is so much to be known, when there are so many fields of knowledge in which the same words are used with different meanings, when everyone knows a little about a great many things, it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone to know whether he knows what he is talking about or not” (pg 17).

JOHN STOREY : CULTURAL THEORY AND POPULAR CULTURE
1999, 2nd edition

Introduction

I do not know what I am talking about and I doubt that I ever will. I have been labelled as avoiding the issue of categorization which, although an unjust label, I do not attempt to denounce as false. It is important for me to not divert from the chaos I represent with weighty ideologies and simplifications. Like a panoramic photograph which tries to capture the whole scope of vision and evoke that same feeling of the monumentality of what it depicts, I try to encapsulate the zeitgeist of the age. By giving no area, subject, object or text any precedence; by collapsing the natural hierarchies of categorizations, by deconstructing the binaries that we so assiduously take and use at face value, I exemplify true democracy.

My work is a dialectical struggle to come to terms with this “true democracy”; an ideal which due to its nympholeptic nature in the current global society as well as in my artwork causes much confusion and noise. Like those in power, rhetoric can be used to subdue the ceaseless noise but I don’t because I am not a sophist.

Needless to say, stability is a figment, implemented and controlled by whoever rules, and I find it even more non-existential and unattainable once the philosophies of such persons as Lacan, Derrida & Sartre have infected your perception. The tarnished facades of order are exposed and I try to elucidate that with my creations.

My art is a libation to these three men and the countless others that have opened my senses to the enormity which is possibility, which is everything.

Bricoteur

It could be said to be a detailed panorama of the vast vicissitude that is a culture of perpetual instability, always poised on the brink of *something*. Culture is in perpetual flux, a stationary principle can become obsolete a second after conception or implementation. So, in the face of this uncertainty, what can one create which belies the contrary and transient nature of one’s environment? Any creation is abbreviation of what I am trying to say, thus you can see the futility and frustration of trying to make/create/justify.

So how can a historically minded artist such as myself overcome this problem, of making an object which proposes a dialogue or an ideology that has gone relatively undiscovered or unexplored until its conception. Since I try to exemplify the atypical and contrary, even arbitrary nature of my age, the process of bricolage, a process that places the brinkmanship that is artistic practice within its socio-political point of inception and construction.

Bricolage – n. pl. same **I** construction or creation from what is immediately available for use. **2** an assemblage of haphazard or incongruous elements [ORIGIN: French, from *bricoler* 'do odd jobs' + **-AGE**.]

Taken from the Australian Oxford Dictionary, 1999 (the ultimate guide to Australian English)

Bricolage is a limiting process, in a way, since it can only serve to illustrate the cultural and artistic environs it came from. Using whatever materials I have at hand, with whatever knowledge I stumble across, I embody an existential artist, one who makes choices and creates debates directly from the present state of being. Bricolage is the best way to do this, in my opinion since it can serve to illustrate the indoctrinated precepts of post-structural thought also. The haphazard mess belies its origin, in one way or another, through psychoanalysis or anthropology; it tells an awkward narrative that only it can tell.

I am condemned to bricolage really because I cannot begin to try to imply or create a structure, I prefer to keep my ideas, processes and actions as non-structural as possible, so that the presupposed elevation or declination of the "Good" in opposition to the "Other", is blurred and confused, as it should be. The voices of both binarial counterparts are allowed to bestow their accumulated grievances upon the world and engage in a tautological dialogue within itself and all over the place.

Chaos Ensues?

What are the ramifications of this way of seeing or being or creating? To the non-personal eye; chaos is constantly encroaching upon a threshold, the threshold of how much the human mind can handle. It is a war between sensuality & chaos, order & non-judgment. The senses are bludgeoned with a creation that constantly collapses in on itself, an inquisition arises; is it the human subconscious trying either in vain or success to attempt to represent itself against the raging nauseic network that is delineated post-structural thinking; or has that network already usurped the position of the author and consumed any and all identity into its bedlam? This is a question that is not answered, for it continues to argue forever different things as different things arise, as its concomitance to this or that or its incongruity continues to tell itself to those who approach with an (in)formed mind.

One can only approach this object that exemplifies meta-destruction with an existential ideology, since such an ideology quells to an extent the epistemological overlay on all matter of man; whether made ⁱⁿ a factory, ~~indented~~ ^{indented} ~~in our~~ ^{in our} ~~or made~~ perception firmly indented to the manacles of the past. These questions still exist, as to the object's history and its validity but are superceded by the experiences (personal) of that which views it.

Experience, as vast as it is unquantifiable, opens up a text (object) to be read in an entirely different light by each new set of eyes and memories that approaches it. (3)
This can be attributed mainly to the postmodern of disability to render any aforementioned intent of the author (artist) to be misconstrued and misplaced by the concept of an individual whose memory has embedded itself into an idiosyncratic perception and to try as s/he might, can never be rid of that.

The notion of the individual; as dictator of its own reality has been devalued and explained to a part by the underlying systems, structures & signs. That the individual inherited from the point of birth into the world. All text can be traced to its historical source and ~~idea~~ the deconstructing it can enlighten one to the ideological evolution that the 'reading' of the text has endured. The structures of knowledge/power and the hierarchy of the binary that it precedes it, unfolds, to make a map, through personal experience, through cultural history which guides and finally ends with a destination, (which is odd since maps do not have a destination demarcated on its topographical assertion; a destination implies a point of arrival & a point of departure. Since the individual is free to roam where it will and more often and not choosing with the specific intention to roam where no one else has roamed before, a typed point of arrival & departure would be useless.)
The destination is where?

Destination... Where?

As an artist, my art; forme - can never be regarded as something concomitant; something with conspicuous correlation to the past. As a heritage, art continues, as an ~~an~~ avant process of creating avant-garde whatever, it dies.
What are the reasons of this death? Postmodern

Post-structural thought mainly. Any text is prone to existing only in its history. So why make art (text) if it deems even before its very inception as an idea or concept to be a his-representation; only a representation of its history. It could be argued that art and its philosophical implicitness to the 21st century is not at fault. There are clearly clever conceptualists out there who create, or recreate, ~~in~~ sometimes in the guise of cathartic process, an object (text) which exposes ~~or~~ something underlying within the very object before its tautology was questioned. The people (who can be martyred for ~~er~~ banishing ignorances of innocuous facts, and thence be seen as the creator of the 'other' half of whatever binarial opposition they are dealing with) are usually unaware of the intricacies, subtleties and hidden substantifications of what they see, or they merely see it as something 'bad', and concede to rational thinking that this author of the 'bad' thing has the ability to do more 'bad' things; the author is then scapegoatified, and Reasoning is misplaced by rationality and life continues.

Art has an a priori precept for me. This precept I still hold true with me and still take as a moral truth. Art-Past (1850-onwards, their birth of 'Modernism') was preoccupied with seeking new things, via albeit 'old methods'. The fact that it employed that which was ingrained and known was irrelevant. Their historicity of their mediums/processes & even predications did not impede their pursuit for the path that led to Avant Gardiness. Along the path the need to predicate the purpose or the eventual product of their perambulations was discarded also, as one can imagine it is/is it impossible to go somewhere ~~to~~ new if one has a specific intent (or an imagined destination) beyond that intent which states to go somewhere

not gone before?

(3)

Things like Structuralism & Post-Structuralism come along through their empiricizing tools and classifiants such as metaphysical historicity, semanalysis, and metalanguage define the reason for all. You can't escape your past, not even everyone's past, and definitely not the legions of dead predecessors that plague your every day ~~per~~ existence. You didn't make your toaster, or originally, a dead person did, you own its replica but not its ~~origin~~ ~~the~~.

The notion of the Avant-Garde is realized simply as an esoteric ideology that was followed and its followers revered once for what it held within that was not immediately apparent or understandable. That notion is destroyed ~~or~~ (explained) with epistemology & the consequent mapping the knowledge/power & all that occurs in between. Freudian psychoanalysis rears its head here too since symbology is such a safe alternative.

But, with this consequent mapping & classification, how can inventions and innovations continue to emerge and propagate at a rapidly expanding rate? Today we have at our fingertips, access to more knowledge, whether correct or incorred, than ever before. Like the painters of the late 19th c, these old & not so old texts, do not encumber or stultify our imagination. In fact they provide a ground for the translation & subsequent extension of the imagination itself. It is the undefining feature of humanity, the most under-recognized ability of the mind is to imagine. And this is not necessarily in the context of vision of preparatory planning, but more importantly, to imagine quite simply what is not the case.